

How to Testify to your Local School Board of Education

What You Need to Know

What is Testifying? Testifying is the act of speaking up in front of policymakers on something you believe in. Oftentimes, you will be reading a prepared speech with statistics and anecdotes to make your argument.

Why is it Important? It gives you an opportunity to voice your concerns and speak on behalf of a student body on issues that you care about. It is important for schools to listen to the student perspective, especially when they are implementing policies and programs or deciding budget allocations that impact you.

How do I Sign Up? Depending on your county, there are different instructions on how to sign up to testify to the Board of Education. You generally have to register for a testimony slot through your school district's website. Make sure to sign up as soon as possible, since slots fill up quickly! You may have different options to testify, such as doing it in-person, virtually, or through writing.

How to Begin

Do Your Research. Once you reflect on your own thoughts and experiences, start talking to students, friends, or family about what issues impact them the most and what specific solutions they would like to see. Make sure to consider different perspectives, whether that be the parent community or school administration, to see their takes on policy changes. There will likely be articles written by local news stations, and you can research your topics of interest to see if you are dealing with a national problem.

If you are interested in youth mental health data and statistics, be sure to check out: [CDC](#), [Mental Health America](#), and the [CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) to get national, state, and local school district data for students in grades 9-12.

Write Your Testimony

- Introduce yourself and the issue you will be focusing on.
- Support your position with both anecdotal and statistical evidence.
 - Are there any statistics about the issue within your school community or district?
 - Do you or your classmates have personal experiences?
- End your testimony with a powerful call to action, or potential solutions that your school district should look into. ([Advocate for Education](#) might be helpful)
- Practice your testimony multiple times in front of a mirror/person and convey emotion during your speech.
 - Consider your eye contact and body language.
 - Figure out certain places where you should pause or emphasize words.

Written by teens for teens.

Thank you to Our Minds Together for developing this resource.



OUR MINDS TOGETHER

Copyright © 2023, Erika's Lighthouse
ErikasLighthouse.org